The Wellspring

. . . reaching out to the community with compassion and caring.

A PUBLICATION OF THE COLORADO AIDS PROJECT MAY - JUNE '87

Executive Director's Report

Good things are happening at the Colorado AIDS Project. We have an expanding Board of Directors. We have a growing staff--at present, in addition to the Executive Director, we have a coordinator of education and public relations, a coordinator of support services, a coordinator of volunteer services and an office manager. This enables us to provide a more extensive program, thereby meeting more needs. In addition to all of the ongoing programs in Support Services, we are undertaking a new Wellness Program (positive approaches to health and wholeness) primarily for those with AIDS, ARC and HIV positive status. In the area of education, we have begun two new programs: a Stop AIDS Program, which is an intensive home-based program for safer sex/risk reduction activities for gay men; and Gay Community Outreach, a program designed for specific outreach to the gay community in Cheesman Park, area bars and bath houses. This program involves the distribution of condoms and safer sex information.

There are also a number of areas which will need urgent attention in the months ahead. We will need more clinical services (support groups and individual counseling at no cost) as the client load continues to increase. We are still trying to find housing services. The need for housing for an ever-increasing indigent population is a critical need. We need to provide assistance to the Black and Hispanic communities in disseminating safer sex/risk reduction information.

We need your help. You have generously given us your moral and financial support in the past, and for that we are grateful. But the client load grows and the demands increase. Please help the Colorado AIDS Project continue to be the loving touch of a caring community.

Hemophilia and AIDS

Hemophilia is a genetically transmitted disease in which certain proteins in the blood necessary for clotting are inhibited or altogether absent. Without these clotting proteins, the normal clotting process does not take place, leaving affected individuals vulnerable to potentially life-threatening episodes of external and internal bleeding. The treatment of hemophilia is quite simple: replacement of the missing clotting factor through direct infusion. The source of this replacement factor is donated blood.

The severity of bleeding experienced by individual hemophiliacs varies according to how much, if any, of the active clotting factor is present. Moderate or mild hemophiliacs possess a reduced amount of clotting factor and may infuse a replacement factor one to ten times per year to stop bleeding episodes. A severe hemophiliac has less than 1% of the normal level of clotting factor and might easily be forced to infuse 40, 50 or even more times per year.

As mentioned earlier, clotting factor is derived from units of donated blood. Some of this blood is used to make cryoprecipitate, a product in which the clotting factor from one unit of blood is given to one hemophiliac. Thus, cryoprecipitate is referred to as a "single-donor" product. The majority of hemophiliacs use a multiple-donor product which is distilled from large quantities of pooled blood donations. This product is concentrated from as many as five hundred to ten thousand units of donated blood per batch. Each time a hemophiliac infuses using this concentrated product, there is a risk of infusing the blood of thousands of donors at once. This concentrated clotting factor has been the primary source of exposure to hemophiliacs by the AIDS virus.

There are roughly 20,000 hemophiliacs in the United States, 400 of whom live in the mountain states of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana, and are severe enough to have required treatment with replacement clotting factor. Nationally, the rate of exposure to the AIDS virus through clotting factor has been 60-75% in mild and moderate hemophiliacs and at least 90% in severe hemophiliacs. In Colorado, the percentage may be somewhat lower, with approximately 70% of those hemophiliacs tested for the AIDS antibody showing a positive result. The number of hemophiliacs actually manifesting the AIDS disease itself currently stands at just under 300 nationally and 10 in the Colorado region.

The major exposure of hemophiliacs to the AIDS virus took place between 1981 and 1985. In 1985 the four large pharmaceutical companies that produce the concentrated clotting factor began exposing the product to heat during its manufacture. This "heat-treating" has been shown to effectively kill the AIDS virus and thus render the concentrated product safe. Heat-treatment is now part of a three-part approach to ensure the product's safety: first, the individual blood donors are screened to eliminate those that belong to any high-risk group; second, each unit of donated plasma is tested for HIV exposure; finally, the concentrated clotting factor is heat-treated during manufacture. Since the time these measures were instituted, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has reported no new cases of seroconversion (exposure to HIV) resulting from these products.

(cont'd)

Hemophilia (con'td)

For newly diagnosed hemophiliacs this is good news indeed. It means that their risk of HIV exposure from today's blood products is virtually non-existent. There are even safer, genetically-engineered products being developed which will eliminate the risk completely. But for the majority of hemophiliacs, those who were using blood products in the early to mid-1980's, the exposure has already occurred. Hemophiliacs, as a group, are being catastrophically impacted by HIV. During the upcoming years, the needs of the hemophilia community with regard to AIDS-related services and support will undoubtedly increase. It can only be hoped that our society will be able, and willing, to help.

One Role for CAP: An Intermediary Between Gay and Straight Cultures

The Intermediate Type

"If you know your history
then you would know where you're coming from
then you wouldn't have to ask me
who the hell I think I am."
Bob Marley

Many gay persons and lesbians mark the beginning of modern gay liberation with the Stonewall riots which occurred in New York City in June of 1969. The several days of rioting were sparked by a routine police raid of a bar largely frequented by street drags. We all know it's not a good idea to mess with a drag queen, especially not a streetwise one; the New York City police department did not.

It's good for any people struggling with their identity to latch onto symbols and turn them into power-creating myths. I think we've done that with Stonewall. But just as the AIDS crisis is challenging us to look at many things about ourselves, I think it also forces us to look beyond Stonewall and the ensuing sexual liberation of the 70's for who we are, where we've been and where we are going in the future. Gay people did not just appear on the scene in the 60's with LSD and free love.

Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) was an English writer and gay mystic who intensely took a look at himself and others like him. A name he used to describe us was the "intermediate type." Carpenter is considered by many to be an important precursor of present day gay liberation.

The intermediate type has been an integral part of all races and most cultures since the "Clan of the Cave Bear" and will continue to be as long as human beings are tolerated by mother earth. AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease and this has unfortunately caused us to focus even more on that one component of ourselves that makes us different, as far as most people in our culture are concerned. But being intermediate types, there are many things besides the sexual that help us see the world--and our place in it--a bit differently from our non-gay brothers and sisters.

In order to put AIDS into perspective and keep it from destroying us by reinforcing society's endless message that we are bad, we must get a sense of who we are and realize that we play an integral role in the perpetuation and thriving of all human societies. In order to get in touch with our true natures, we need to look beyond Stonewall and the guppie ghettos that have evolved.

One place we can begin is to study and rediscover how the people native to this continent (pre-Columbus/Cortez) viewed the intermediate type. An exciting look at sexual diversity in American Indian culture is the book The Spirit and the Flesh by Walter L. Williams. A name sometimes used for gay Native Americans is berdache, a French word. "The berdache receives respect partly as a result of being a mediator. Somewhere between the status of women and men, berdaches not only mediate between the sexes but between the psychic and the physical--between the spirit and the flesh." (Walter Williams, 1986.)

The Colorado AIDS Project (CAP) is the sort of organization that many gay people are naturally attracted to. CAP can be viewed as an organization that mediates between the spirit and the flesh. There are, of course, many wonderful non-gay people also playing out this role in the organization and so CAP provides for a very intimate and growth-enhancing mix of straight and gay energies.

If there is a single most important goal of gay liberation, it is the integration of gay persons and lesbians into society as the respected intermediaries and mediators that we are. This occurs in a very fundamental and lasting fashion through organizations like the Colorado AIDS Project.

Recommended Reading

Mobilizing Against AIDS--The Unfinished Story of a Virus; Institute of Med. & National Academy of Sciences.
AIDS: Facts and Issues; Victor Gong, M.D. & Norman Rudnick.
What to Do About AIDS: Physicians and Mental Health Professionals Discuss the Issues; Ed., Leon McKusick.
When Someone You Love Has AIDS: A Book of Hope for Family and Friends; Betty Clare Moffatt.
Available at Category Six Bookstore

Civil Rights and AIDS

Persons with AIDS or related conditions who feel they have been discriminated against on the basis of handicap may file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Health and Human Services. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination based on the disabling effects of handicaps such as AIDS or related conditions. Section 504 applies to employers and organizations which receive federal financial assistance from any federal department or agency, including the Department of Health and Human Services. In most cases, you must file your complaint within 180 days of the most recent discriminatory act unless you have a good reason for not filing. For more information, contact Vada Kyle-Holmes, Regional Manager, Office for Civil Rights at (303) 844-2024, or Duane Niemczyk, AIDS Coordinator, at (303) 844-4774.

AZT: A Personal View

8:00 am, 12 noon, 4:00 pm, 8:00 pm, 12 midnight, 4:00 am: that's my schedule because I'm taking AZT, the most promising drug that is currently licensed by the FDA to treat AIDS.

I started taking AZT in early January 1987 after a bout of PCP (a pneumonia commonly associated with AIDS). At the time, AZT was still an experimental drug. Burroughs Wellcome, the manufacturer of AZT was authorizing use of AZT only to AIDS patients who had suffered PCP.

I immediately experienced several of the side effects and frustrations commonly found with AZT use. The worst of the side effects is a problem with the bone marrow's ability to produce red blood cells. Since January, I have had three transfusions to replace the red blood cells. Without the transfusions, I become very weak and lethargic to the point of not being able to function on a day-to-day basis. Although transfusions are relatively safe, there is always the possibility of having an allergic reaction or contracting a blood borne disease such as hepatitis. My alternative to the transfusions is to stop taking AZT or to cut back drastically on the dosage.

Not as dangerous, but very inconvenient, was the nausea that I experienced the first three weeks after I started AZT. It was bad enough that I had to take a drug to keep from vomiting. It's very demoralizing to take a drug knowing that you will be glued to the toilet within an hour, and then do it all over again four hours later.

And perhaps the least dangerous, but most restricting, side effect is the schedule AZT takers must abide by. The drug is taken every four hours. Much needed sleep is disrupted as least twice each night to get up and take your pills. At one point, I was taking three different prescriptions on three different schedules. I was waking up every hour to take pills.

The most distressing aspect about taking AZT is that AZT is basically an untested drug with dubious benefits. Although Burroughs Wellcome has been monitoring AZT use and will continue to do so, very little data has been compiled from scientific studies. Long term benefits or side effects have not been proven and the longer term safety of the drug has not been established. In effect, current users of AZT are the guinea pigs for this drug.

Coupled with the high cost of the drug (about $8,000 per year), the reasons listed above create some strong deterrents for AZT users. Why do I suffer the indignities and possible harmful effects to take a drug without proven benefits? Well, unfortunately, it's the only choice I have. Nothing else has been proven to be more effective than AZT. I take AZT because it's possible that my life may be prolonged by doing so. It gives me hope for the future and a somewhat better life in the present. I need to be taking steps in a positive direction to deal with AIDS, and AZT is a step in the right direction.

Life Cycle Donations

We invite and encourage you to make life cycle donations to the Colorado AIDS Project. Life cycle donations are opportunities to honor, to celebrate or to remember persons, activities or events.

In March, the Board of Directors of the Project contributed $50 in honor of Denver Health and Hospitals for hosting the January medical conference on AIDS and in appreciation for the staff and volunteers of the Project. Also in March, an anonymous family donated $1,000 in loving memory of their son who was one of the Project's clients.

In April, the Board of Directors contributed $100 in celebration of the new Board members. Paul Mesard donated $100 in celebration of his completion of long distance commuting.

Another anonymous family contributed $5,000 to the Project from the estate of their son who had been a project client. They also donated another $5,000 in his loving memory.

We urge you to use the Colorado AIDS Project as a vehicle for your celebrations and commemorations. Please designate if you wish to remain anonymous.

Wish List at the Project

The following items are currently needed at the Project:

typing tables — photocopier
evaporative air cooler — bookshelves
copy paper — 10-key adding machines
microwave oven — large refrigerator

Pat Bond brings "Beloved Hick" to Denver to Benefit CAP

Pat Bond, whose fame as an actress became international with the precedent-shattering documentary, "Word Is Out" in 1969, will appear in two performances of "Beloved Hick" (depicting the 30-year love affair between Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hicock) as a highlight of Gay Pride Week in Denver in June.

Bond will bring her show to the Metropolitan Community Church for 8:00 pm performances on Saturday, June 27, and Sunday, June 28. Tickets are priced at $7.50 and $10, and proceeds will benefit the Colorado AIDS Project.

There is a long tradition of women helping in the AIDS crisis. This program demonstrates the Colorado AIDS Project's commitment to a broad scope of fundraising activities which include programs of special interest to women.

Tickets will be available beginning June 1 at Category Six Books (1029 E. 11th Avenue), Women's Book Garden (2625 E. 12th Avenue), and Thomas Floral (1 Broadway). Tickets will also be available by phone (837-0166) at the Colorado AIDS Project office weekdays during regular business hours. Tickets may be charged to MasterCard or VISA at the CAP office. Performances will be signed for the hearing impaired.

Boulder County AIDS Project Garage Sale

There will be an all-day garage sale on Saturday, May 23, to benefit the Boulder County AIDS Project at 235 Greenrock Drive in Boulder. For more information or to donate items, please call Sandy at 443-6747 evenings.

Thanks VOA

Many thanks to Volunteers of America for several donations of food and office supplies to the Colorado AIDS Project. These generous donations have assisted greatly in stocking up the CAP food bank. Special thanks to VOA Meals on Wheels Director Jim White and to VOA's Steve Holbrook.

Colorado AIDS Project Staff

Julian Rush--Executive Director
Carol Krantz--Volunteer Services Coordinator
Gregg McGreevy--Education / Public Relations Coordinator
Barbara Slauson--Office Manager

Brian Bostron--Newsletter Editor

The Wellspring

The Wellspring is published quarterly. The next deadline for publication is June 15, 1987.

Board of Directors

Bob Engel--President
Donna Cecere--Vice President
Tim Timmons--Secretary
Lee Rudofsky--Treasurer
Ron Bennett
Max Evans
Jill Friedman Fixler
Sandi Gloss
John Jay
Paul Mesard
Phillip Nash
James Nichols
John O'Neal, M.D.
Bill Reynard
Bruce Rosenbaum
David Woodyard
Robert Yegge

JOIN US FOR THE 3RD ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL AIDS CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

On Memorial Day, 1987, across the nation and across the world, communities will gather together to peacefully demonstrate their dedication to ending the AIDS epidemic.

Join us as we:

Honor those that have died from AIDS and support those living with AIDS.

Call for an end to discrimination against those with AIDS, ARC or HIV (AIDS virus) infection.

Reaffirm our commitment to ending the AIDS epidemic through personal responsibility and a commitment to safer sex.

Encourage increased AIDS education for our youth, people of color, those who engage in high risk behaviors as well as the general community.

Monday, May 25, 9 pm, Colorado State Capitol, East Side
Bring your candle and your commitment!

Statistics as of May 1:

AIDS IN THE U.S.
Diagnosed
35,219
Deaths
20,352

AIDS IN COLORADO
Diagnosed
370
Deaths
238

COLORADO HEALTH NETWORK
P.O. Box 18529
Denver, CO 80218

(303) 837-0166

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Denver, Colorado
Permit No. 52

Mr. Bob Armintor
Colorado Springs, CO 80907

Address Correction Requested